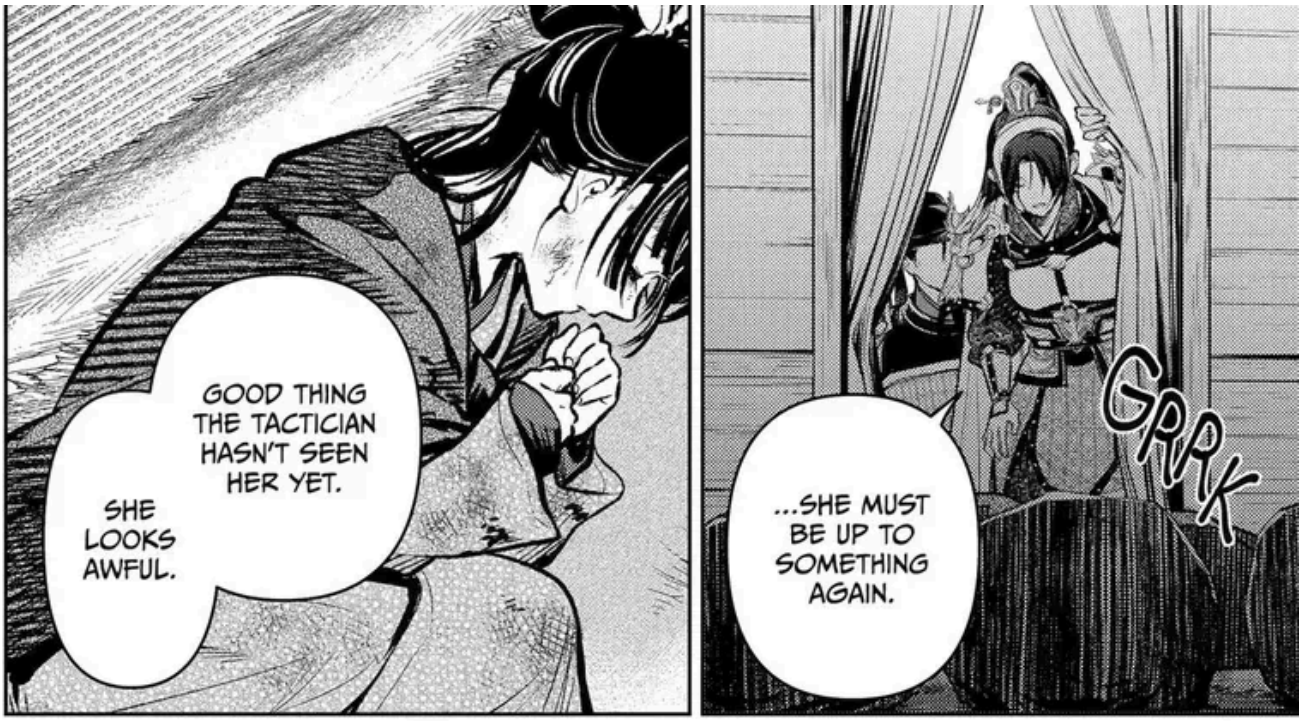
Chapter 84: Hoodwinked

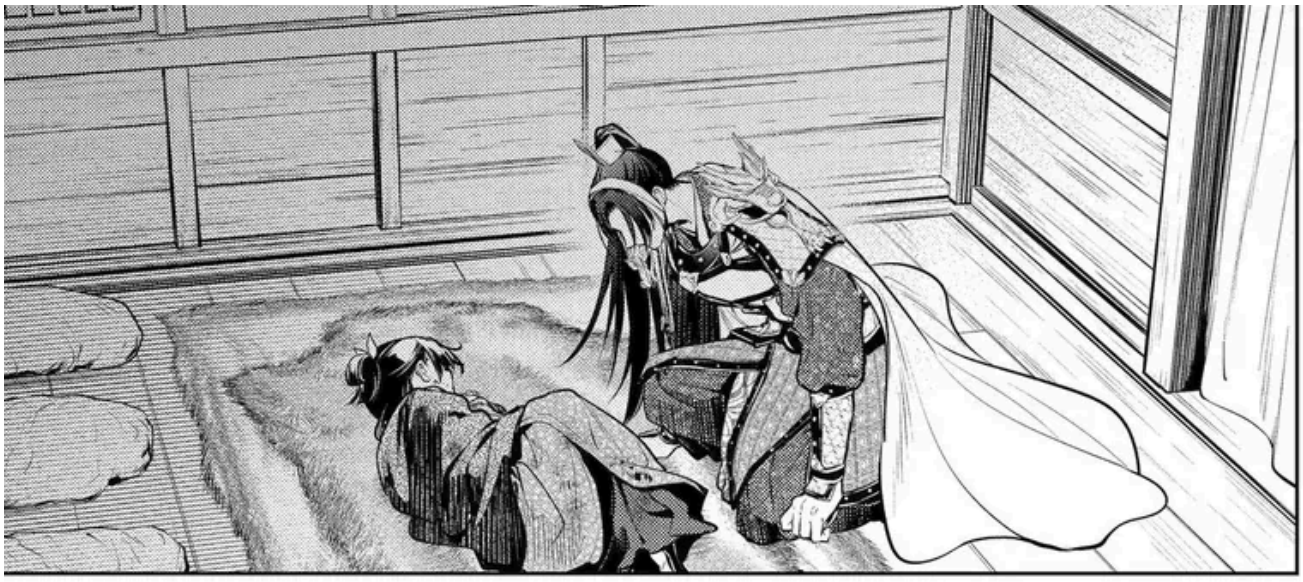
HOW IS...?
SAFE. PLEASE, GET SOME REST.
CRNCH
CRNCH
CRNCH
WHERE IS SHE?
MY BODY FEELS SO HEAVY.
...IN THAT CARRIAGE.

I WOULD ADVISE AGAINST DRAWING TOO NEAR, PRESENTLY.
WHAT ARE THOSE BUNDLES?
WHY ON EARTH IS SHE SLEEPING HERE, OF ALL PLACES?
SHE WAS INSISTENT THAT SHE STAY HERE.
DEAD BODIES. CHILDREN OF THE SHI CLAN.


GOOD THING THE TACTICIAN HASN'T SEEN HER YET.
SHE LOOKS AWFUL.
GRRK
...SHE MUST BE UP TO SOMETHING AGAIN.

WAIT OUTSIDE.
I'M FINE.
YOU LOOK NO BETTER, SIR.

GRRK
GRRK



YOU LIKELY WOULDN'T HAVE ENDED UP LIKE THIS...
...IF YOU HAD NEVER GOTTEN WRAPPED UP WITH ME.

A BRUISE.
DID SOMEONE HIT HER?
WHAT ELSE ...?
...NGH.

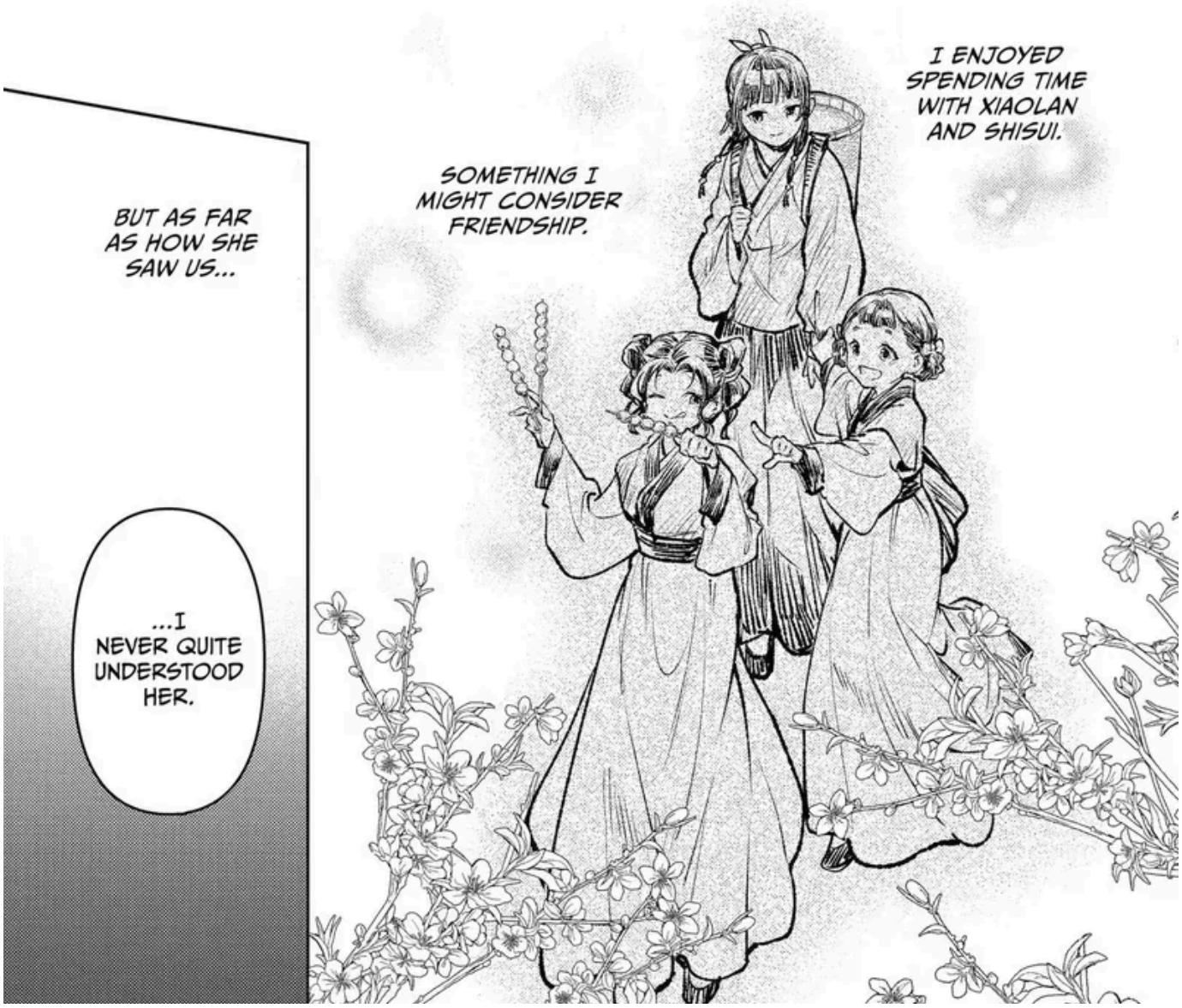
SHUDDER
AND WHAT, PRAY TELL, DO YOU INTEND ON DOING, SIR JINSHI?
WH— I—
SIR JINSHI.
WERE YOU INJURED?
FWP
ALLOW ME TO LOOK.
IT'S NOTHING SO DRAMATIC. JUST A SCRATCH.

ALLOW ME TO LOOK.
HONESTLY, IT'S NOTHING. YOU DON'T NEED TO SEE.
SCOOOT
SLIP
SLIP
THD

HMPH
I WASN'T ABOUT TO SIT IN SAFETY WHILE ALL THIS WAS GOING ON.
CRUDELY STITCHED.
QVR
QVR
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR STATION?
IF YOU CHARGE HEADLONG INTO DANGER AND GET HURT...
...YOU CREATE PROBLEMS FOR EVERYONE AROUND YOU.
I WANT TO FIX IT, BUT I'M SO TIRED, I CAN'T KEEP MY HANDS STEADY...
POW
GAO SHUN CERTAINLY DIDN'T HOLD BACK.
...
TRUE.
I NEED TO REMEMBER TO APOLOGIZE TO BASEN.

WRAP
WRAP
NOT SO CRUDELY!
BUT I'M FINE NOW.
IT'S NOT LIKE I WAS PLANNING ON GETTING HURT OR ANYTHING.
NOBODY EVER DOES.
IT WAS JUST DIFFICULT TO DENY THAT REQUEST, AS STRANGE AS IT WAS.

WERE YOU VERY CLOSE TO LOULAN?
RELATIVELY.


I ENJOYED SPENDING TIME WITH XIAOLAN AND SHISUI.
SOMETHING I MIGHT CONSIDER FRIENDSHIP.
BUT AS FAR AS HOW SHE SAW US...
...I NEVER QUITE UNDERSTOOD HER.

I NEVER QUITE UNDERSTOOD HER EITHER, AT THE END.
I SEE.
BACK THEN...
...WHEN SHISUI STEELED HER RESOLVE AND TOOK OFF.
I KNEW THIS WOULD BE THE RESULT.
SIR JINSHI, YOU DO NOT SEEM WELL AT ALL.
I WOULD ADVISE YOU TO REST.
AS SUCH...
...I'LL TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING SHE LEFT IN MY HANDS.

I'M BEAT.
YOU'VE GOT ME THERE.
SWSH
PLEASE DO NOT SLEEP HERE.
YOU ARE BETTER OFF STAYING FAR AWAY.
ROLL
WHA—?
OH?

WHMP
THEN WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN ...
...YOUR TEACHER TOLD YOU TO NEVER HANDLE CORPSES. RIGHT?

EVEN I CAN MUSTER SYMPATHY FOR THESE POOR CHILDREN.

HE REMEMBERED THAT?!
FWP
IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE WHY YOU'D BE LINGERING HERE, IN THAT CASE.

JUST A RUN-IN WITH A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING.
WHA?
...YOU WERE ASSAULTED?
GLANCE
TUG
RIGHT.
THIS BRUISE. WHAT HAPPENED?
ALWAYS SO EAGER TO MEDDLE WHEN IT COMES TO OTHERS' CHASTITY.
BY A WOMAN, YES.
SO IT WAS NO MORE THAN A FAN.

SLIP...
JOLT
SWP
IS THAT GOING TO LEAVE A MARK?

FWM
IT IS MINOR ENOUGH. IT WILL FADE SOON.
GRP

HEH
I'M A MAN. IT DOESN'T MATTER FOR ME.
IF I MAY, SIR JINSHI, YOU WOULD DO WELL TO TAKE YOUR OWN ADVICE.
BE SURE YOU DON'T GET ANY SCARS.
THEN I DO NOT CARE, EITHER.
I DON'T CARE.
YOU SURPASS SUCH DISTINCTIONS, SIR JINSHI.
...
AND YOU WERE SO READY TO GET ON MY CASE ABOUT THAT.
...THEN SO BE IT.
IF A SINGLE SCAR CAN SO EASILY SQUANDER WHATEVER VALUE I HAVE...

AM I THE KIND OF MAN WHOSE WORTH DEPENDS ON REMAINING UNSCATHED?

GRP
NO MORE THAN A PRETTY FACE?

A FEW MORE SCARS MAY DO YOU GOOD, IN FACT.
FWM
FWM
JINSHI'S MIND-BOGGLING BEAUTY OBSCURES HIS INHERENT HONEST CHARACTER.
PRECIOUS FEW OF THOSE AROUND HIM SEE THAT.
HM

Swp
IF ANYTHING, I'D SAY YOU LOOK MANLIER NOW.

...I WAS REALLY TRYING TO CONTAIN MYSELF, CONSIDERING THE CIRCUMSTANCES.
SWSH
GRP!!!

SIR JINSHI?
...I WAS COMMITTED TO KEEPING MY COMPOSURE.
AND AFTER SEEING YOUR BRUISE ...

IN FACT, I'M SURPRISED BY HOW WELL I MANAGED.

NO. I'M OKAY.
"OKAY" IS NOT THE WORD THAT COMES TO MIND.
I— IF YOU'RE TIRED, YOU HAD BETTER BE ON YOUR WAY.
GK
SIR JINSHI!
ALLOW ME TO FIX YOUR SUTURE!
I CAN GET YOU SOMETHING FOR THE PAIN, TOO!
I'LL MANAGE. ANOTHER HALF HOUR WON'T KILL ME.
A HALF HOUR FOR— WHAT, EXACTLY?

SCRRP
WAIT.
THIS IS REALLY BAD.
SCRRP
HE'S SO TIRED, HE'S ACTING LIKE A STRAY DOG.

THERE'S NOWHERE TO RUN!
RSTL
RSTL...

HUH?
WHAT WAS THAT?
RSTL
NO...
FWM

SSNN...
AH...

"IF ONLY THEY WERE INSECTS. THEN THEY COULD HAVE SURVIVED THE WINTER."
THE INSECTS THAT SOUND LIKE RINGING BELLS DON'T LAST THROUGH THE WINTER, BUT THEIR YOUNG DO.
THAT WAS A HINT.

...IT BRINGS THE IMBIBER BACK TO LIFE.
THAT'S WHAT SUIREI SAID.
THE REVIVAL ELIXIR FIRST INDUCES DEATH...
...AND THEN ONCE ENOUGH TIME HAS PASSED THAT THE POISON HAS WORN OFF...

THAT'S IT.
THIS IS WHY THEY BROUGHT ME HERE. IT WAS FOR THIS MOMENT.
RUB
RUB
RUB
COME ON...
COME ON...!
COME BACK!
SIR JINSHI! WATER!
PLEASE, I NEED HOT WATER!
THEY'RE... ALIVE?

...THOSE WHO'VE DIED ONCE ALREADY...
FOOD, CLOTHING, ANYTHING!
AND ANYTHING ELSE YOU HAVE THAT CAN WARM THEM UP!

UNBE-LIEVABLE.
I WAS COMPLETELY HOODWINKED.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
HURRY!

CAN WE AT LEAST CONTINUE THIS LATER?
FINE, FINE.
BUT PLEASE, LET'S NOT WASTE ANY MORE TIME.